

Hello,

We've finished the May 20, 2014 Bulletin 120 (B120) forecast update. The forecasts include observed conditions through the morning of May 20, 2014 and are posted at <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/iodir?s=b120up>.

Forecast Summary:

Considering the rivers forecasted in the B120 update, the projected median April-July runoff in the major Sierra river basins ranges from 11 percent on the Tule River to 49 percent for both the Total Inflow to Shasta Lake and the Sacramento River above Bend Bridge. On average, the forecasts increased 1 percent from the May 13 forecast. The forecasts in the Sacramento and San Joaquin hydrologic regions increased 1 percent, and the forecasts in the Tulare hydrologic region remained relatively unchanged compared to the May 13 forecast. The largest increase of 3 percent was forecast on the Tuolumne River. The same three hydrologic regions have April-July forecasts of 39, 31, and 27 percent of average.

Runoff:

The flows through two-thirds of May are less than 45 percent of average ranging from 11 percent on the Tule River to 42 percent on the Mokelumne and Tuolumne rivers. During the heat wave last week, rivers from the Mokelumne southward had rising flow rates which indicated additional snow melt. The subsequent peak flows were the third peak of the season following peaks in mid-April and early May.

Precipitation:

As of May 20, 2014, the Northern Sierra 8-Station (8SI) and San Joaquin 5-Station (5SI) precipitation indexes both registered 0.5 inches for the month.

As of May 20, the 8SI seasonal precipitation is about 28.6 inches which represents 61 percent of average to date and 57 percent of an average water year.

As of May 20, the 5SI seasonal precipitation is about 18.8 inches which represents 49 percent of average to date and 46 percent of an average water year.

Snowpack:

As of May 20, the snow sensor data indicates that the northern, central, and southern Sierra snowpack are at 5, 6, and 2 percent of average to date, respectively. The statewide snow water content stands at only 0.6 inches which is 4 percent of normal to date.

As of May 20, all pillows in the Trinity, Sacramento, Feather, and Eel River basins are bare. In the central and southern Sierra, all pillows below 7,600 feet are bare.

Weather and Climate Outlook:

The forecast for the next six days shows trace amounts for today in the American River basin, San Joaquin River basin, and the eastern Sierra. No precipitation is expected for the remaining days of the period. Freezing levels will remain above 10,000 feet in all regions for the period excluding the North Coast where they are expected to drop as low as 7,000 feet on Tuesday – the last day of the forecast period.

The NWS Climate Prediction Center's (CPC) one-month outlook for June, updated May 15, suggests increased chances of above normal temperatures for all of the State. The same outlook predicts equal chances of above or below normal precipitation Statewide.

The CPC's three-month outlook (June-August), updated May 15, suggests increased chances of above normal temperatures for all of California. The same outlook predicts equal chances of above or below normal precipitation Statewide.

ENSO-neutral conditions continue in the equatorial Pacific. Sea surface temperatures are above average across the equatorial Pacific Ocean. The chance of El Niño conditions increases during the remainder of the year, exceeding 65% by summer.

Next Update:

The next Bulletin 120 update for conditions on May 27, 2014 will be available May 29, 2014.

If you have any questions regarding this forecast, please contact a member of the Snow Surveys staff. We are happy to help.